

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Reply is in response to an Office Action dated April 10, 2003. A Petition for one-month extension of time along with an authorization to charge the required statutory fee accompanies this Reply.

Claims 1-68 were pending at the time of the Office Action. Claims 25-46 were allowed. Claims 1, 4-24, 47 and 55-68 were rejected based on U.S. Patent No. 4,833,698 to Flannery et al., with certain claims rejected based on Flannery in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,493,593 to Müller et al. Claims 2,3 and 48-54 were objected to, but were determined to be allowable if written in independent form to include all limitations of their respective independent claims and any intervening dependent claim(s).

In this Reply, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation of former claim 2, which has now been cancelled. Claim 47 has been amended to include the limitation of former claim 48, which has now been cancelled. Claims 3, 18 and 50-54 have been amended. Claims 15-17, 19-24 and 60-68 have also been cancelled. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, all claims as amended should be allowable.

The Examiner objected to the Abstract of the disclosure because it was longer than 150 words. In response, Applicants have provided an amended Abstract which overcomes this objection.

Figures 1 and 3-7 were objected to due to irregular line weight of reference numbers. In response, Applicants have provided corrected FIGs. 1, 3-7 to overcome this objection.

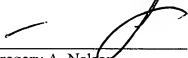
It is believed that all claims are now in condition for allowance and all objections have been overcome. However, Applicants request the Examiner to call the undersigned (direct 561-671-3662) after review of this Reply if the Examiner determines that any clarification is necessary to permit issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in any fees due with the filing of this paper or credit any overpayment in any fees paid on the filing, or during prosecution of this application to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 8/11/07



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Docket No. 6321-206